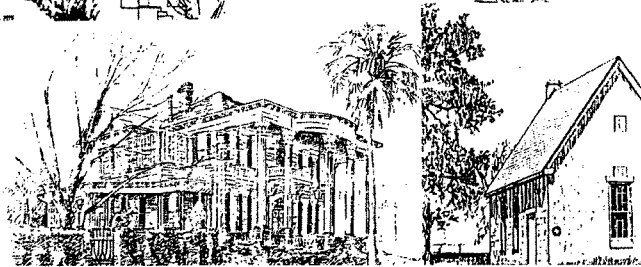


Design Guidelines For The Historic Districts of the City of San Marcos, Texas



This publication is a project of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of San Marcos:

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Courtesy of San Marcos Heritage Association

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Purpose of the Design Guidelines

These guidelines and recommendations are intended to preserve and maintain the character of the historic buildings in San Marcos. They reinforce and protect the defining features of the historic districts and define those visual elements which are common to the district as well as the qualities unique to this community.

This document should help to preserve the integrity of historic buildings and enhance the value of the Historic Districts for both the private investor, residents and owners, and the community as a whole. When addressing changes to an individual building, it must not be taken out of context. Modifications affect the block as a whole and should have the broad interest of the community in mind.

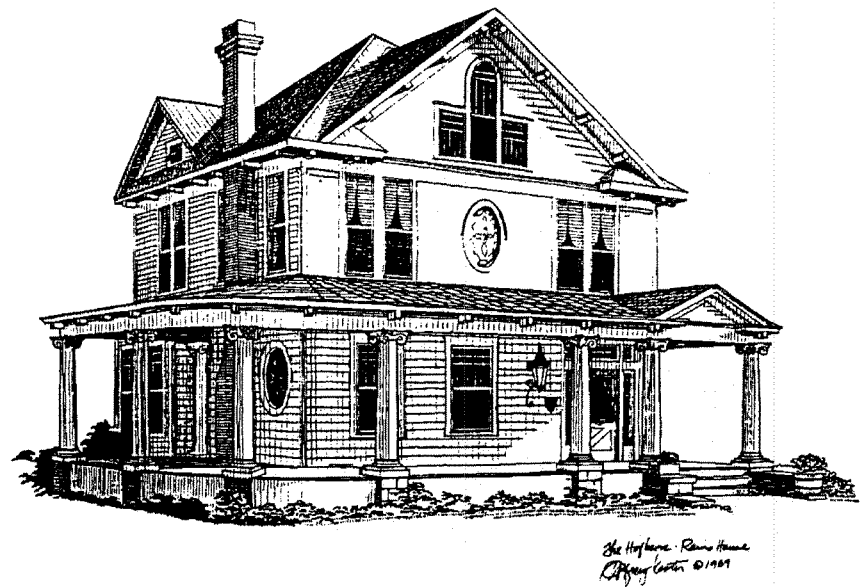
The guidelines have no control on the use of the building or its interior. Only the exterior portions, which includes new construction, additions, and rehabilitation of the building shall comply with the guidelines set forth.

These guidelines should be applied to a building based on its original use and construction. For example, a residence may currently be used as an office, therefore it is considered a commercial business, but it is still a residential building.

These guidelines will be used by the City of San Marcos to provide an objective basis for the decisions of the San Marcos Historic Preservation Commission and City Planning Staff. The guidelines specifically address the issues below, as outlined in Section 42.129 of the ordinance:

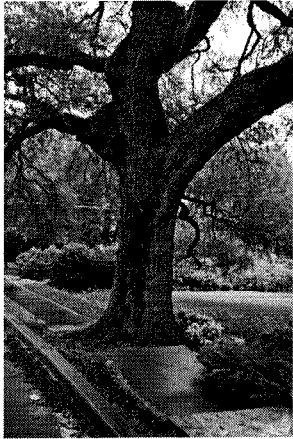
- Height.
- Proportion of building's front facade.
- Proportion of openings within the facility.
- Rhythm of solids to voids in front facades.
- Rhythm of spacing of buildings on streets.
- Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projection.
- Relationship of materials and texture.
- Roof shapes.
- Walls of continuity.
- Scale of building.





Design Guidelines for Residential Buildings

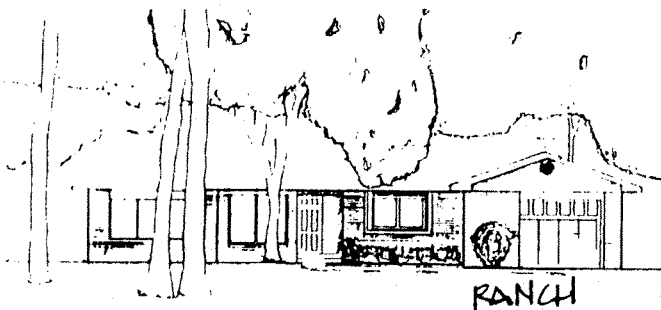
Residential Neighborhood Characteristics



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Building Development and Characteristics

The historic neighborhoods of San Marcos developed during three major time periods. Each period of construction brought different architectural styles, details and materials.



- The first surge of building took place from the 1880s through the 1910s. The wealthy of San Marcos built large Queen Anne and Classical Revival style houses. Along more modest means, Folk Victorian homes were constructed. Folk Victorian, also known as Vernacular, was smaller in size and simpler in detail. “Folk” styles were constructed of commonly available materials purchased as off-the-shelf items from the local lumber yards. Wood was the most common building material of houses during this time period.
- In the 1920s and 1930s Craftsman and Bungalow houses were constructed on vacant lots in the current historic districts. Wood dominated residential construction during this time period but brick and stone were used for porch details and column bases. Concrete block was introduced as a building material for a few craftsman houses in the San Marcos neighborhoods. It was also during this time period that a few revival style houses, such as Tudor and Italian Renaissance were constructed using masonry.
- By the 1970s a few vacant lots remained in the present historic districts but several houses were demolished to make way for the construction of newer housing which included modern Ranch and other contemporary styles. It was during this time period that brick and stone were readily used as the exterior of a house.



FOLK VICTORIAN
L-PLAN



FOLK VICTORIAN
I-PLAN



NEOCLASSICAL



PRAIRIE BOX



CRAFTSMAN



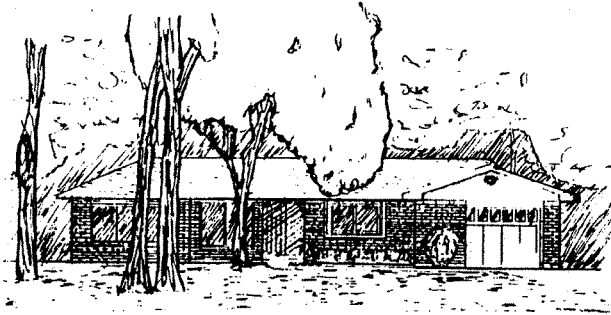
TUDOR

The most common building styles in San Marcos consist of:

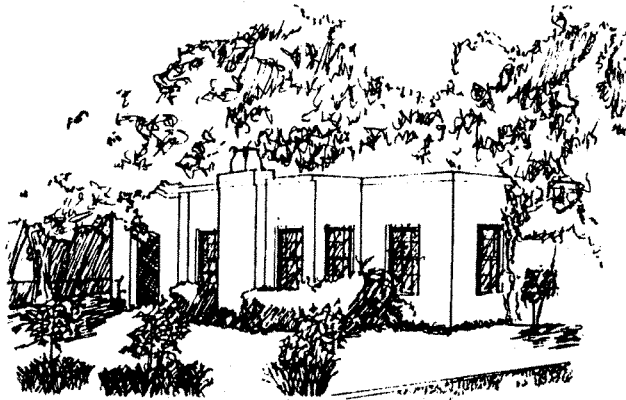
- Victorian styles comprised of many shapes and architectural features including wrap around porches with lacy details and railings, bay windows, recessed second floor porches, turrets and steep, complex roof forms.
- Folk Victorian “L” Plan has a long leg running parallel to the street with a porch that ends at the short leg which faces the street and is usually capped with a gable roof.
- Folk Victorian “I” plan has a long face to the street, a central entrance, symmetrical facade and a gable roof.
- Folk Victorian pyramid has a square plan with a central entrance, symmetrical facade and a hip roof.
- Neoclassical houses frequently have an ornate central entrance and symmetrical front facade, columns with capitals may run the full height of a 2-story house which is rectangular in plan and runs parallel to the street.
- Prairie box, or 4-square, is usually square in plan, 2-story in height, with a single story porch, box columns and an entrance which is not centered.
- Craftsman and Bungalow houses can be recognized by their distinctive box columns which are frequently tapered on bungalow plans, have column bases that extend to the ground. Braces appear at the front facing gable roof line and rafter ends are usually exposed.
- Tudor style houses are rare in these neighborhoods and can be identified by arched entry doors, shallow roof overhangs and prominent chimneys and masonry construction.



ITALIAN RENAISSANCE



MODERN RANCH



SPANISH ECLECTIC

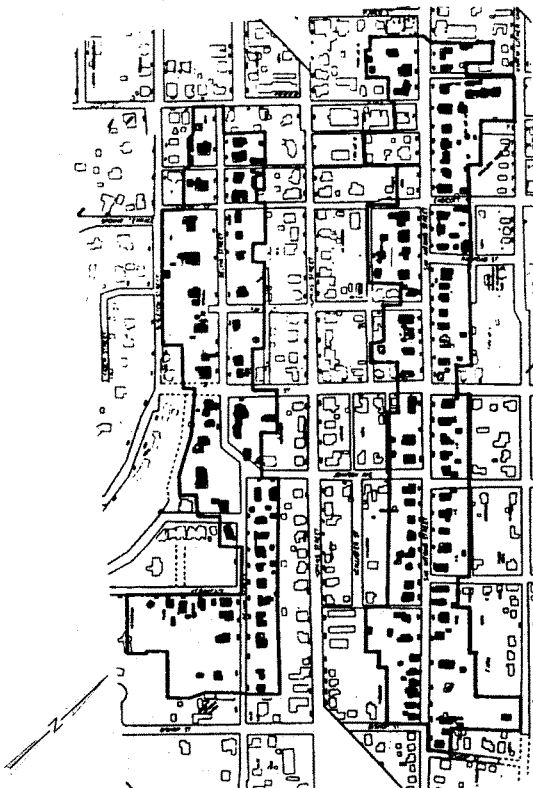
- Italian Renaissance style is only found at 1030 Belvin Street and is identifiable by the hip roof shape covered in barrel tile and supported by decorative brackets, recessed entry porch with single story classical columns and symmetrical facade.
- Modern Ranch style is known for the long, low shape with attached garages and small front porches. These houses introduce new materials to the neighborhoods such as metal framed windows, brick and stone for siding and fabricated metal porch posts
- Spanish Eclectic influence can be found at 1133 Belvin Street. It is identifiable by its flat roof with no overhang. A single prominent arch identifies the front entry. The exterior wall surface is stucco.

Get to know your home and your neighborhood.

- Acknowledge and retain the distinctive characteristics of each style house and the time period in which it was constructed.
- Avoid adding, changing or eliminating decorative elements of a house, which are from another time period or architectural style.



LINES OF CONTINUITY ARE ESTABLISHED BY THE STREET, CURB, PARKWAY, SIDEWALK, FENCES, YARD WALLS AND YARD CURBS.



THE BELVIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT AND THE SAN ANTONIO STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT ARE PARALLEL WITH HOPKINS STREET DIVIDING THE TWO DISTRICTS.

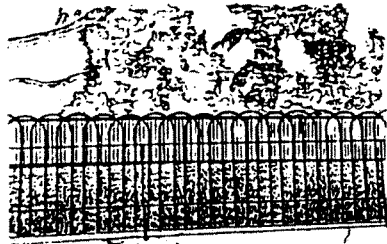
Historic Neighborhood Characteristics

The San Marcos Historic Neighborhoods reflect the development of the City as well as National developmental trends. The farmland at the edge of town became more populated as the town expanded. Both neighborhoods were oriented along primary roads to and from the Central Business District.

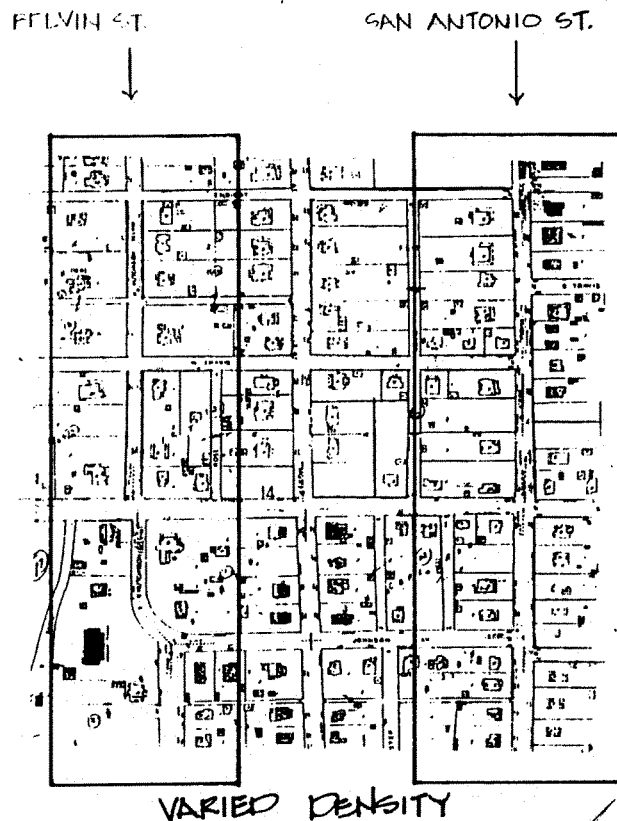
The Belvin Street Historic District is roughly defined by Scott Street on the east and Bishop Street on the west. The San Antonio Street Historic District parallels Belvin Street with Hopkins Street separating the two districts. The boundary begins just west of Blanco Street and extends west to Bishop Street.

While each historic neighborhood has its own identity, the residential historic districts of San Marcos have the following characteristics in common:

- Parkway, which are the unpaved areas between the curb and sidewalk. These parkways have traditionally been planted with trees, grass or foliage.
- Carriage blocks of stone are scattered throughout the existing historic neighborhoods. These blocks were originally used as a step when getting into carriages or mounting a horse.
- Stone lined drainage beds are unique to San Marcos and create part of the charming character of the neighborhoods. These beds carry water runoff and are located perpendicular to the street.
- There is a mixture of architectural styles and periods of construction in each historic neighborhood of San Marcos.



FRONT YARD FENCING



The Belvin Street Historic District possesses the following unique characteristics:

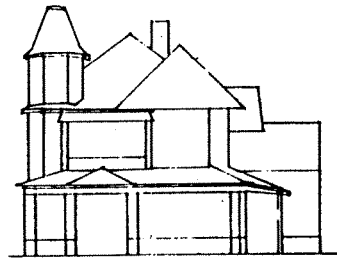
- Lot sizes in the Belvin Street District are frequently larger than that of the San Antonio Street Historic District.
- Many of the houses on Belvin Street are larger in scale.
- The Belvin Street Historic District has several front yard fences. There is evidence that a few front yard fences existed historically. However, the current number and type of front yard fence appears to be a more recent installation, rather than a historical one.

The San Antonio Street Historic District distinguishes itself through the following identifying features:

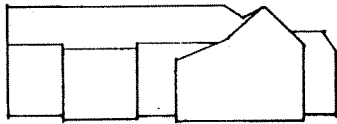
- Unique concrete street markers located at San Antonio Street intersections designate the block number and street name.
- The San Antonio Street Historic District has a larger collection of Craftsman and modern housing styles than the Belvin Street Historic District.
- Many of the yards have a “curb” just inside the sidewalk which further defines the yard from the parkway.
- There have been many alterations to the houses in the San Antonio Street Historic District.
- The density of San Antonio Street is substantially greater than that of Belvin Street due to the lot size and development pattern.

It is important to keep each historic district in context and recognize that there are differences between them.

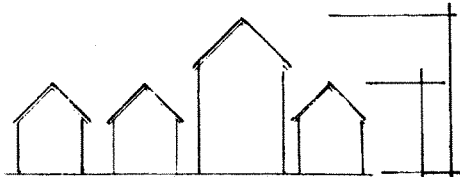
Definitions of Historic Neighborhood Characteristics



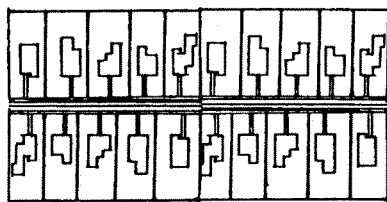
BUILDING
FORM OF
MULTIPLE
SHAPES



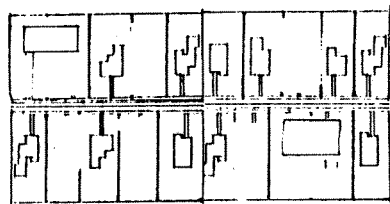
PROMINENT
RECTANGLES



SCALE



EXISTING
RHYTHM



BROKEN
RHYTHM

- Building Form

Building form is primarily dictated by the style of the building.

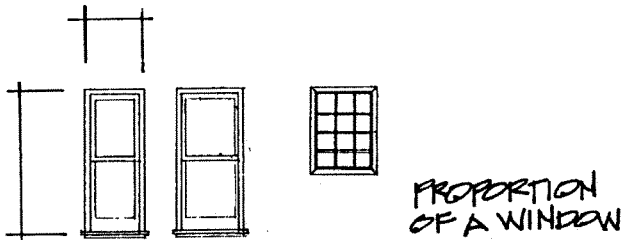
For example, Queen Anne and Victorian styles are recognizable by their compositions of multiple shapes which include bays, dramatic roof lines, dormers and porches. The Craftsman style is derived from a simplified rectilinear plan. The Neoclassical building also derived its form from a rectilinear plan but has a dominant central entry porch with columns which extend the full height of the building. The Tudor form is derived by one or more prominent cross rectangles, its building materials (principally masonry and stone) make it less compartmentalized with fewer openings.

- Scale

The scale of a building is measured as the relationship of building size to something else, such as a human. Windows, entrances, porches, bays and the dimension of building materials contribute to the overall scale of the building. The houses in these districts are one or two stories high and are considered to be “human” scale.

- Rhythm

The rhythm of a street is created by the spacing between houses, the location and spacing of sidewalks from the curb to the entrances of the houses, the location and spacing of the driveway entrances to each property. The rhythm of the street adds to the visual continuity and establishes the organization and site design guidelines for a neighborhood.

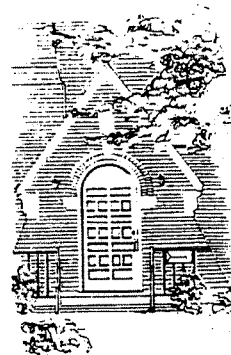


- Proportion

Proportion is the relationship of the dimensions of an object to itself, such as height to width. Proportion is inherent in all aspects of a building form, components and material. As an example, older homes with higher ceiling heights have windows that are taller than they are wide. This proportion is approximately 2 ½ high to 1 wide. House styles of the 1960s to 1980s usually have lower ceiling heights so their windows are shorter and wider.

- Relationship of Materials and Texture

The materials and texture of each home is representative of the style and period of construction. The inherent properties and dimensions of construction materials like brick and wood boards help in understanding the home's size, scale and proportion. Because stucco has no dimension, it is difficult to measure its relationship to the scale of a building. Tudor houses, for example are constructed mainly of brick and stone and because of the size and texture of these materials, the houses express mass with a rustic appearance.

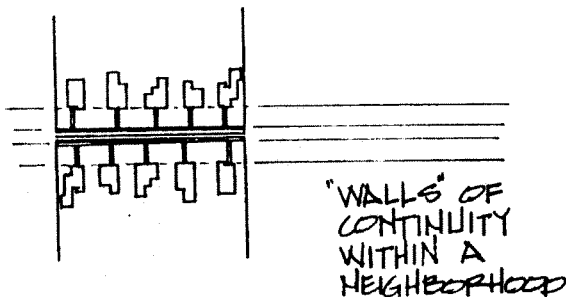


THE TEXTURE OF
A MATERIAL
CAN EXPRESS MASS

CONTRASTING
MATERIALS
EMPHASIZE
DETAIL

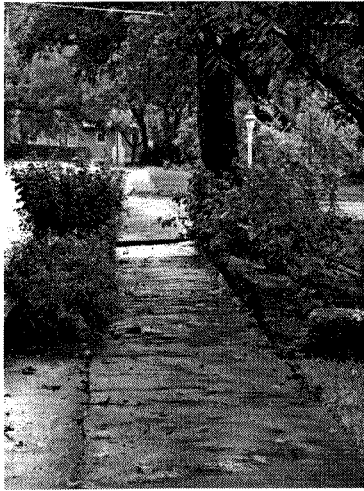
- Walls of Continuity

The front of each building, its walls, its porch alignment and even fences help define a "wall" that establishes a visual pattern along the streetscape. Each neighborhood has visual continuity, starting at the street which is basically a straight line of uniform width. A curb runs along the street defining the green space of the parkway followed by the sidewalk. Each of these elements work to organize a neighborhood. These organizational elements along with orientation and placement of houses on the lot establish the visual continuity of a neighborhood.



Due to the difference in lot size between the Belvin Street and San Antonio Street Districts, the visual continuity and rhythm are different. Each neighborhood has its own established organization which should be respected.

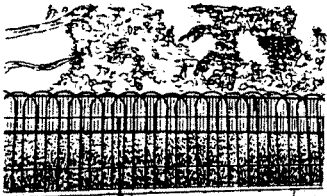
- As changes are proposed to a site or house, review the lines of continuity and rhythm established in the neighborhood. Look at the scale, form and proportions of proposed changes. Will the proposed project retain



PARKWAYS ARE A
COMMON FEATURE



CONCRETE RIBBONS LEAD
TO A GARAGE BEHIND
THE HOUSE



THIS FRONT YARD FENCE
DOES NOT OBSCURE THE HOUSE

Site Development and Orientation

The organization pattern established in each Historic District guides the development and proposed alteration of each site. Historic neighborhoods were designed to be pedestrian friendly since walking was a major mode of transportation. Houses face the street with a logical, visible entrance and a sidewalk that leads from the street to this entrance. Sidewalks from the street to the front door help establish rhythm.

There is an established distance from the street to the house, which is called a setback. This setback reinforces the importance of the entrance and orientation of the building. Building beyond this setback would change the visual continuity established.

Driveway approaches in the front yard lead to garages and secondary out-buildings, which are located behind the main house. Contemporary style houses have incorporated their garage or carports into their house plan, but typically they do not project beyond the established front wall of the house. While the construction of new garages and carports is sometimes necessary, their placement and approach should respect the original “front line” of the house. This would place them behind the existing setback. Locating them to the rear of the property is preferable.

Front yards are defined by sidewalks, yard curbs, short walls, boundary walls made of stone, brick, concrete or concrete block. These walls are low in profile and do not obscure the house. Front yard fences are not common in these neighborhoods, but there is evidence of historic fences in the Belvin Street Historic District.



STRONG PEDESTRIAN APPROACH



RETAIN THE ORIENTATION
OF THE HOUSE TO THE STREET

The following guidelines are recommended:

- Retain the orientation of the house to the street. To change the entrance from the front would alter the pedestrian approach and rhythm.
- Removing or relocating the sidewalk from the street would break the rhythm of the neighborhood. Broken sidewalks should be replaced but the location should remain. The material should match the original or should be compatible with the house and the surrounding neighborhood. Materials such as stone, concrete or brick pavers, and decomposed granite are appropriate replacement materials and are not as harsh as large expanses of concrete.
- Driveway locations should not be altered if it affects the rhythm of the street. Materials that might be used for a driveway are gravel, pea gravel with a brick or metal edge band, pavers, concrete strips or “ribbons” and asphalt. Front yard circular drives are not appropriate to the neighborhood because they encroach on the setback and break the rhythm on the street.
- The style of the house and the surroundings should be considered when thinking of any type of front yard fence. For example, an ornate Victorian fence would look out of place in front of a Craftsman style house.
- Review the reason for wanting to install a front yard fence. Did one exist historically? Houses constructed in the 1880s had front yard fences to keep livestock from roaming into the yard. Houses built in the 1920s had no fences in the front yard, which reflected a “progressive” movement when fencing laws reduced the chance for roaming livestock.
- Can the fence be installed at or behind the setback line?

Modern Conveniences and Amenities

Historic homes offer charm and character not always found in current residential construction. As families grow and residents grow older, needs change. Air conditioning is a welcome relief from the heat and humidity San Marcos. Additional rooms and bathrooms may be necessary as children get older. Steps may become impossible to maneuver with age or a disability. The installation of a “no-step entrance” or ramp can maintain or prolong ones independence and mobility.

Adapting a historic home for modern use, while maintaining the homes original character, requires thoughtful planning. Weigh the safety and comfort concerns with that of historical accuracy, economic feasibility and long term impact. Ask yourself “How can this improvement or necessity be installed or removed without causing irreparable damage to the historic character of the house or neighborhood”.

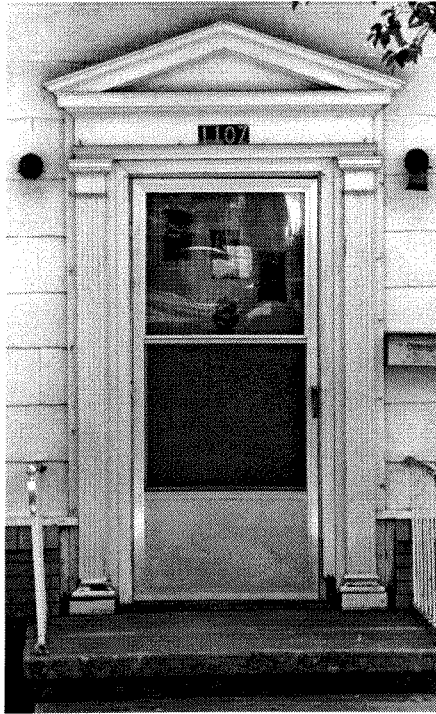
The following includes some of the commonly installed amenities and additions to historic properties:

- Carefully consider access ramps for temporary or long term disability, and the location and impact of the ramp on the house and neighborhood. The removal of a small section of railing on the side of a porch may be more convenient and less intrusive to the front of the house. If the porch is not elevated, consider replacing the sidewalk with an incline to eliminate steps at the porch or door.

- Air conditioning and electrical equipment should be installed in such a way that it will not damage important architectural features. Study possible locations for the equipment and install it where it is least visible from the street or can be screened with planting material.
- Antennas and satellite dishes are considered a removable fixture but with some thought can be sited away from public view.
- Chimneys are an important architectural feature and the removal or alteration of existing chimneys alters the historical integrity of the house.
- Decks and patios can be compatible with historic houses if thought is given to location, proportion and materials.
- Dormers are important to the composition of the roof and should not be eliminated. Scale and form should be retained. New dormers may allow for additional use of the attic, but should be designed to match the style of the original house.
- Flags and banners are considered a removable amenity but, care should be used when mounting to not damage the historic materials of the house.
- Light fixtures located on the building exterior, porches, pathways and paved areas should be appropriate in design, scale and character of the house. There are many available adaptations of fixtures in various architectural styles. A Victorian light fixture is appropriate with a Victorian house but not appropriate with a Ranch or Craftsman style house.
- Mailboxes and mail slots should be simple and as unobtrusive as possible. Mailboxes can be obtained in styles compatible with the time period of the house.

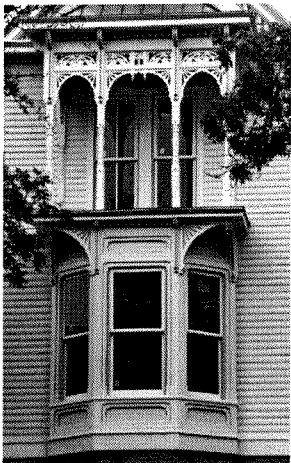
- Shutters may be installed if they are in keeping with the style of the house and the period of construction. Shutters should be correctly proportioned to the width and height of the window and should be installed with hinges rather than nailed to the wall.
- Skylights can add light to interior spaces and may make attic spaces more useable. If flat in profile and positioned away from public view skylights can be installed in older houses. Bubble dome skylights are not appropriate for Historic Districts.
- Storm/screen doors and windows can be installed without hiding the historic door and surrounding features. Metal framed doors and window screens are acceptable if selected with a white factory finished or painted the color of the door and window trim. Wood storm/screen doors and windows designed for the style of the house can be purchased at most lumber yards.
- Orient garages away from the primary view and install single car doors instead of double wide doors.

As you formulate your ideas to modify and improve your home, questions will arise. There are many sources available for advice and assistance including a neighbor who has completed a similar project, the Texas Historical Commission, City Staff and the City of San Marcos Historic Preservation Commission and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Helpful publications to begin your project include *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Projects*, *Preservation Briefs*, *Traditional Building Magazine*, *The Old House Journal* and *Catalog and Renovator's Supply Catalog*.

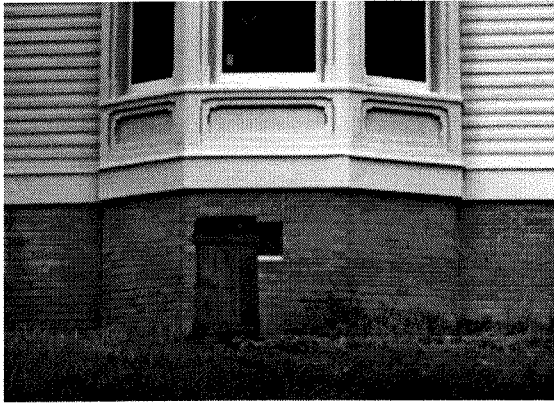


Residential Building Components

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Foundations and Skirting

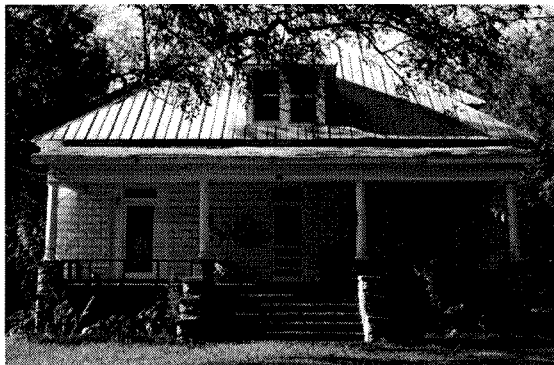


BRICK PERIMETER WALL SUPPORTS THE HOUSE AND CLOSES THE SPACE UNDER THE HOUSE

Historic homes were not built on concrete slab foundations as the majority of houses are today. The historic homes in San Marcos are wood frame construction with wood pier and beam foundations. The house is elevated above the ground because the beams supporting the house rest on a grid of cedar posts, brick or stone piers set into the ground. This creates a crawl space between the floor structure of the house and the earth.

Homes of brick and stone, along with a few wood frame houses, have brick or stone perimeter walls. More commonly, concrete block, which resembles stone, is used for perimeter walls. These houses have interior posts or piers as mentioned above. The perimeter walls support the house and close the space under the house, yet are designed with openings for ventilation.

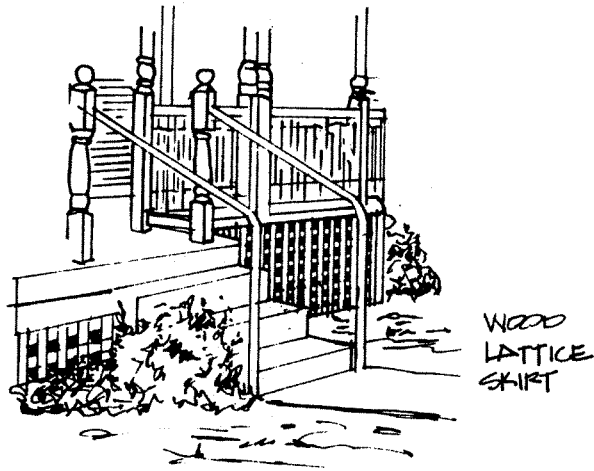
HOUSE IS ELEVATED ABOVE GROUND



Houses that have no perimeter walls close the crawl space between the floor of the house and the ground with a “skirt”.

The design and detail of the skirt is defined by the style and time period of the house. For example, Victorian houses frequently have a distinctive ventilated skirt of vertical and horizontal wood strip lattice, while Craftsman houses frequently have a flared skirt of horizontal board siding that matches the body of the house. No matter what the style, all skirting must provide ventilation to avoid trapping moisture, which causes mildew and wood rot.





PRESSED
METAL
SKIRT

The following guidelines are recommended:

- Foundations should be repaired before starting other repairs to a house. Leveling a foundation may cause a house to shift. The shifting usually adds to the damage that has already occurred from the house settling unevenly and cause additional damage to the roof and walls.
- The foundation posts may be replaced with new posts of cedar or chemically treated wood designed for in-ground contact. Concrete piers may be installed, since they have a longer life than wood posts. Floors can be leveled and additional supports may be installed at this time if needed. Select a reputable foundation contractor, before leveling a home.
- Both stone and brick foundations may have deteriorated or are missing mortar which requires repointing or replacing mortar. It is imperative to use mortar which is softer than the masonry to avoid accelerating the deterioration of the stone or brick. Ideally, the replacement mortar should match the original in composition and, if exposed to view, should match the color and joint type as well.
- Portland cement or masons mortar is harder than most historic masonry materials and should not be used.
- The skirting may deteriorate over time and should be repaired or replaced if missing or badly deteriorated. The skirting should match the original in design and detail.
- Skirting of solid materials such as brick or stucco are discouraged because it changes the historic appearance of the house and does not provide the essential ventilation required for pier and beam foundations.
- Cement board siding may be an acceptable alternative for ground contact skirting if installed in a manner that reflects the original design, detail and dimension.

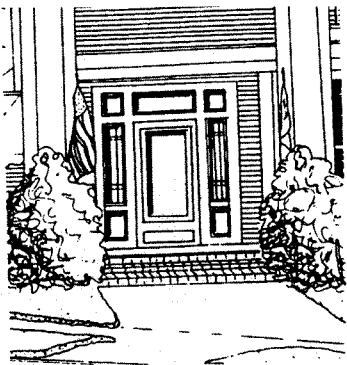
Porches



Historically, the most dominant feature of a historic home is the front porch, which was used as an extension of the living space, contributing to the character of the street and the life of the neighborhood. The details of most porches in the San Antonio and Belvin Street Historic Districts are intact. The original character defining features and elements of their individual styles are still evident. Because most of the homes are constructed with pier and beam foundations, the porch floors are elevated above ground level. The newer slab-on-grade foundations have a porch at a much lower level.

Porches may require a great deal of maintenance because of their exposure to the weather but the removal or alteration of a porch will have a significant impact on the character of the house and neighborhood.

Some of the porches have been altered over time with more modern materials that require less maintenance. These alterations have changed the character defining features of the original design. Some of the common changes included the removal of wood columns and installation of fabricated metal porch supports; replacing wood steps with concrete or brick steps; removal of wood porch floors and installation of concrete or brick porch floors at a lower level than the original porch.





RETAIN ORIGINAL MATERIAL AND CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES



Old Episcopal Rectory

Another common alteration is the enclosure of porches to create additional living space, bathrooms and entrances.

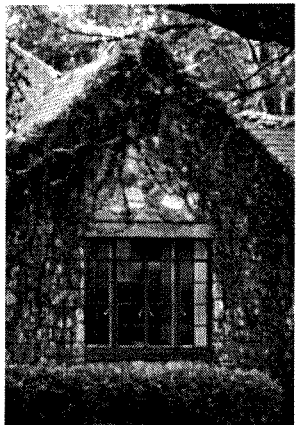
Wood steps, porch floors, column bases and railings are usually the first things to deteriorate on historic porches because of their exterior exposure.

The following guidelines are recommended:

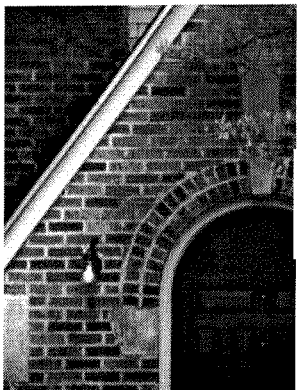
- Keeping a porch and its corresponding features and details in good repair is far less costly than allowing deterioration to continue resulting in the major repair or replacement of large portions of the porch, details and structure underneath.
- Retain original material and make repairs that match the original design of the porch floors, columns, railings, brackets, steps and other character defining details.
- While the installation of concrete or brick steps does eliminate some of the maintenance of wood steps, it changes the character of the house. Concrete steps are normally not anchored to the original porch structure. Concrete steps pull away from the porch, sink or rotate unless the entire porch has been changed to concrete.
- A porch floor that has been lowered changes the step location to the front door, which can be awkward without a landing at the door. It also requires a change in the support of any columns the porch design may have had.
- If concrete or brick has been installed it must be removed prior to rebuilding a wood porch. New wood would deteriorate at a rapid rate because of the moisture condensation on the concrete and brick mass.
- If a porch has been drastically altered, or if there is no clear idea of what the original details were, look to a similar house for ideas regarding porch design.



HORIZONTAL WOOD SIDING IS THE MOST COMMON EXTERIOR WALL SURFACE



STONE IS NOT COMMON ON HISTORIC HOMES



RETAIN THE ORIGINAL WALL SURFACE TO RETAIN THE CHARACTER

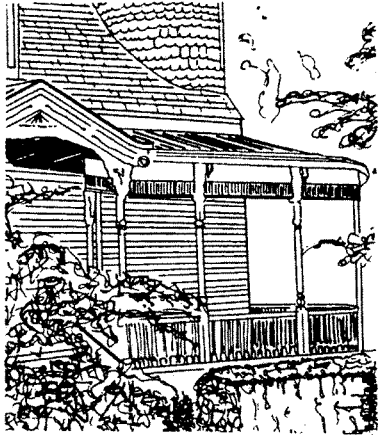
Exterior Wall Surfaces

The most common exterior wall material in the San Marcos Residential Historic Districts is horizontal wood siding of numerous profiles. Brick, stone, stucco and asbestos shingles were also used as the original wall surface material on some houses. Other siding materials found in the districts include decorative wood shingles which are frequently seen on gable end walls and on turrets. Board and batten siding, which is a vertical wood siding, is common for outbuildings.

The original siding material is still in place and visible on the majority of homes in the neighborhoods. However, some of the houses have been covered with brick, stucco or synthetic sidings such as asbestos, vinyl or aluminum.

The following guidelines are recommended:

- The exterior wall surface material is an integral part of the original design, style and character of the house and should`
- Each material requires different types of maintenance, which can be referenced in the residential building materials section of this document.
- It is important to retain the original wall surface because of the character of its dimension, profile and shadow lines to each distinctive material.
- If the building was constructed with wood siding and needs repairs or board replacement, most siding types are still manufactured and available from suppliers or can be milled for a nominal set up fee. Many of the wood sidings have been on the houses for nearly one hundred years and may well last another hundred if properly maintained and painted.



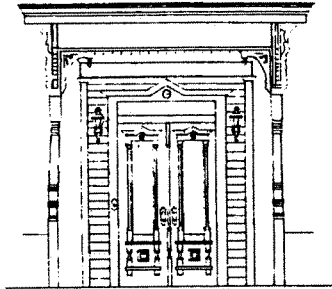
DECORATIVE SHINGLES
ADD TO THE FINE DETAIL
OF THE TURRET

- For the integrity of the neighborhood and the house itself, it is not recommended that any synthetic siding be installed over existing wood siding. The installation of synthetic siding changes the appearance of the house and conceals the original details. Additionally, synthetic sidings trap moisture in the wall causing deterioration of the historic material beneath.
- A property owner is not required to remove synthetic siding from a house which currently has such siding installed. However, the removal of newer siding or wall surface material and the repair of original siding and trim is encouraged. This would help return a building to its original character.



ALUMINUM SIDING
CHANGES THE CORNER DETAILS
OF THE ORIGINAL SIDING
BUT PROVIDES THE HORIZONTAL
LINE

Exterior Doors and Entrances



THE ELABORATE
DETAILS OF THIS
ENTRY REFLECT
THE QUEEN ANNE
STYLE



THESE ENTRY DOORS
AND TRANSOM ARE
IN SCALE WITH THE
GRAND ENTRY PORCH

THE SINGLE ENTRY
DOOR IS
SURROUNDED
BY TRANSOMS
AND SIDE LIGHTS



Both San Antonio Street and Belvin Street Historical Districts have a wide range of entrances corresponding to the variety of housing styles. Even the simplest of houses has a well defined entry which faces the street. Homes constructed during the late 1800s and early 1900s usually have front doors with glass upper panels. Many have transom windows above the door and windows, also called side lights, to the side of the door. A few of the older Victorian and Neoclassical houses have highly detailed door surrounds, a pair of doors in one opening and a single transom above.

A single round-arched doorway with a heavy solid wood door is commonly found on Tudor style houses while Italian Renaissance has an arched doorway with an elaborate door surround and entrance. Craftsman and Prairie style houses typically have doors with a pattern of small glass panels in the upper portion of the door. Bungalows often have two “front” doors leading from the porch and Modern styles have a simple single entry door.

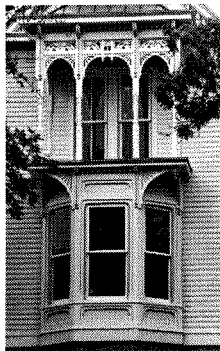
It is important to recognize that each time period and style of house has a different type or style of entrance. If an entrance has multiple components such as glass panel doors, transoms and sidelights they should be retained but if an entrance simply has a door, adding decorative features will confuse the style and create a false sense of history.

The following guidelines are recommendations:

- View the entrance as more than a door. Door frames, trim and surrounds help define the character and style of the house.
- Old doors can be repaired or, if badly damaged, can be replaced with an old door of similar design. Doors can also be copied and manufactured by a skilled wood worker.
- Readymade wood doors that are compatible in style and design are available.
- For improved energy efficiency install weather stripping to seal the edges of the door.
- Reduce air flow at the bottom of the door by installing a door sweep to fit snugly against the threshold.
- If a wood threshold is badly damaged, a new wood threshold can be milled by a lumberyard.



THE TALL NARROW OPENINGS AND THE GLASS IN THE SASH HELP TO ESTABLISH A DATE OF THE HOUSE



WINDOWS WITH A 2/2 APPEAR AT THE UPPER FLOOR

A 1/1 CONFIGURATION WINDOW IS COMMON TO ALL HOUSE STYLES



WINDOW SCREENS WITH DETAIL APPEAR ON CRAFTSMAN AND PRAIRIE STYLE HOUSES

Windows

Windows play an important role in the character definition of the houses and the overall neighborhood. The proportion, material and organization of windows in the wall help to establish a construction date of the house. The detail of the window is frequently a key characteristic in identifying an architectural style.

The majority of windows in the Belvin Street and San Antonio Street historic homes are the traditional wood, double hung, rope and pulley system. Many of the houses have a simple one over one configuration while others have multiple pieces of glass in a single window sash.

A few houses were constructed with steel casement windows, which were a modern installation in the 1930s. These windows are not known for their energy efficiency, but can be maintained and made more efficient by installing a storm window on the inside of the house.

The following guidelines are recommended:

- Original windows should be retained as they are a strong character defining feature on a house.
- It is not necessary to replace an entire window if only a portion is in need of repair. Consider replacing the deteriorated portion only. A single sash can be made to replace a deteriorated one.
- Proper window fit, weather stripping, new glazing compound at the glass, and sealant around window frames can improve the energy efficiency of wood windows substantially, while retaining its historical character.

- If windows are missing or if frames are deteriorated beyond repair, replace them with a window of the basic dimension and profile as the original.
- Imitation dividers or “snap-in” muntins that do not truly divide and hold pieces of glass should be avoided.
- Most aluminum windows are not considered an option and have not been proven to be more energy efficient than a well maintained wood window.
- Replace original glass only when broken as the wavy quality of the historic glass adds to the character of the house. If glass is broken, attempt to replace with old wavy glass.

Roof Form and Details

Roof forms and materials are an important feature in defining the character of the house and neighborhood. House styles and periods of construction influence the form of the roof. The simple gable roof form is found on Folk Victorian, Craftsman and contemporary styles such as Ranch. More complicated roof structures include a combination of hip, gable, dormers, turrets, towers and are found on Victorian style houses.

The shape and slope of a roof has a significant impact on how the building addresses the street. A gable roof which faces the street has a stronger presence and is more inviting than a gable roof that runs parallel to the street. In the case of the latter, the roof is sloping away from the viewer. The amount of slope, also known as the roof pitch, reflects the style of the house. Steep pitches are found on Victorian and Tudor styles, while lower pitched roofs are found on Ranch and Craftsman style houses.

Roofs are the one part of a house, which may need to be replaced rather than repaired. Roof repairs are often temporary and a new roof will be necessary at some point in the future. A roof leak may actually be a “flashing” leak around a chimney or vent pipe. Flashing is usually a metal material intended to seal the joint where the roof might have openings, such as vents, or connections to another part of the roof such as a dormer. For historical accuracy, replace the deteriorated roofing with a material that matches the original in composition and profile. A non-original roof that does not leak is better than an original roof that does. However, select an alternative that closely resembles the type of roof that might have been on another constructed during a similar time period. In San Marcos it is not



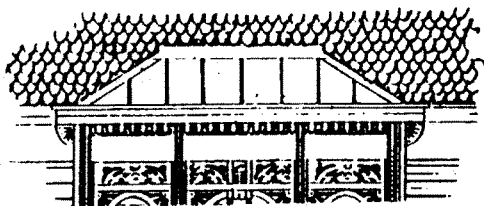
THIS COMPLICATED ROOF FORM AND ELABORATE DETAILS INDICATE QUEEN ANNE



THE SIMPLE GABLE ROOF IS FOUND ON CRAFTSMAN HOUSES



STEEPLY PITCHED ROOFS ARE FOUND ON TUDOR STYLE HOUSES



MAINTAIN THE FLASHING WHERE THIS
ROOF MEETS THE WALL



THE NEOCLASSICAL
STYLE HOUSE
HAS A HIP ROOF
AND ORNATE
DETAILS AT THE
ROOF LINE



THIS VICTORIAN HOUSE HAS A
SIMPLE GABLE ROOF AND ORNATE
DETAILS AT THE MINOR ROOF FORMS

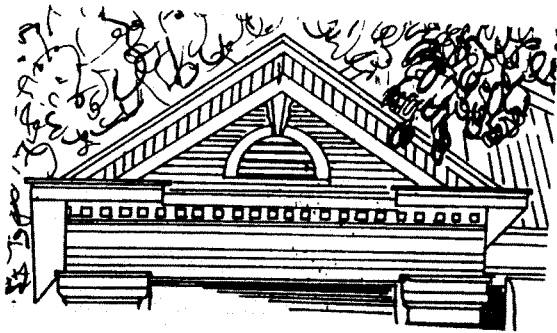
uncommon for one house to have multiple roofing materials. As roofing materials have deteriorated, they have been replaced with alternative materials. A house may have a standing seam roof on one portion and composition shingle on another.

Roof details vary from style to architectural style. Truly ornate details, such as consoles and dentils appear at the roof line of some Neoclassical and Victorian examples while very few roof detail appears on modest Victorian and Tudor styles. The one feature which appears on houses of all historic styles is the dormer. Dormers appear in different sizes, shapes and materials. Some have windows while others have attic vents but they help to provide visual continuity to the neighborhood and scale to the roof.

A variety of roofing materials have been installed in San Marcos. Composition shingle is the most common, economical roofing material. There are a variety of metal roofing materials installed, including historic standing seam metal to pre-finished corrugated metal sheets. Clay tile is a character and style defining material with only one example in the Belvin Street Historical District. Several houses are covered with asbestos shingles or tiles which are no longer manufactured. These shingles have a distinctive dimension and profile and should be retained if possible. If replacement is necessary, there are composition shingles and concrete tile which closely replicate the asbestos material in pattern and profile. Another consideration might be to reinstall unbroken shingles to the roof which faces the street and install a composition roof of similar color to the less visible portions of the house. While asbestos shingles do not pose an environmental or health threat while used as a roof material, their disposal will be subject to special consideration. Check with local authorities for proper disposal sites.



RETAIN ORIGINAL ROOF FORMS
AND DETAILS



The following guidelines are recommended:

- Maintenance of the roof and flashing is important. In the event replacement is necessary, select a roofing material that is compatible to the design of the house.
- Maintain the original details of a house and avoid adding details that did not exist originally.
- If attic space is converted to living space, retain the original roof pitch when adding dormers and roof additions to avoid a “pop-up” appearance.

Color

Color is an important component of a buildings style and character. Color is also the most emotional topic of personal taste and historic authenticity. To find the original color scheme of the house, scrape small areas of existing paint until you reach the first coat of paint or have a chemical analysis completed by an expert. When matching paint samples, it should be remembered that the original paint color probably faded before it was repainted.

For a compatible historic color scheme, research the colors that were being painted in the historic areas of San Marcos. Then research the colors available in San Marcos at the time your house was built. This information can be obtained from paint manufacturers such as Sherwin Williams, Pratt and Lambert, or Benjamin Moore, just to name a few. If, for example, the paint color selected for the house was purple, a manufacturer would be able to tell you the year purple pigment was available for house paint.

Paint colors vary according to style and time period of house. Style books offer traditional color schemes for houses of that style and period. Many paint companies have “historical” color charts that can offer some guidance. Color schemes should tie a building together and create harmony in the facade. Keep the neighborhood and surrounding houses in mind.

Painted brick is not found on the houses of San Marcos and it would not be historically accurate to paint them. One reason brick and other masonry materials were selected initially was to avoid the need for paint.

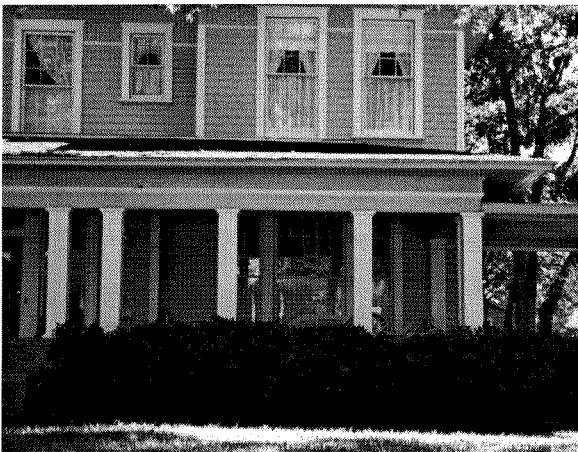
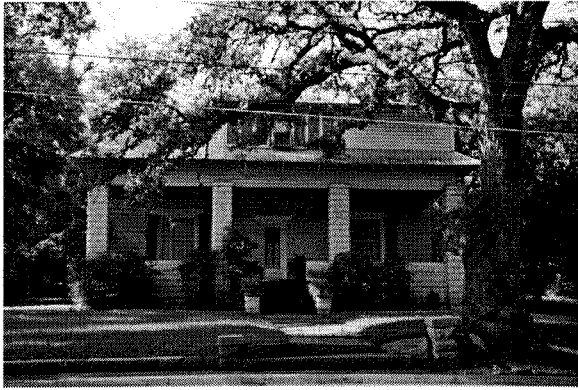
Dark colors fade and “chalk” or get a white powder on the surface because of the South Texas sun. Historically paint had a flat finish without gloss or shine. A “satin” finish paint can provide the appearance of historic paint while providing the easily washed surface of a gloss finish. Many homeowners assume the house needs to be painted when it really needs to be washed. If mildew is the problem, wash the house with a mild bleach and water mixture to kill the mildew. Shade from trees, combined with the humidity of San Marcos, add to the possibility of mildew on painted surface.

The preparation of the surface to be painted is an important step in painting. The surface should be scraped and sanded to remove any loose paint but it is not necessary to remove all paint down to bare wood. Make sure the wood is dry before applying a good primer and two top coats of paint. Use a brush for the best coverage instead of a sprayer.

The following guidelines are recommended:

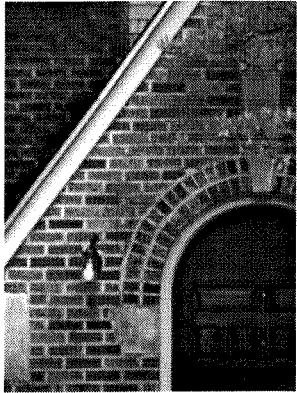
- Do your research when selecting paint colors for your house.
- Local paint stores can provide assistance in selecting or matching paint colors as well as recommending historic paint colors of the area.
- City staff and the Historic Preservation Commission can provide assistance in your research efforts.

Residential Building Materials



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BRICK WITH STONE ACCENTS



BRICK USED AS A SIDEWALK



ROUGH FACED CONCRETE BLOCK

Brick and Concrete Block

The Belvin and San Antonio Street Historic Districts have only two historic homes which were originally constructed of brick. Brick veneer is found on newer houses which have been built in the districts. Brick was the common material for chimney construction, and the chimneys usually had decorative brick detailing or corbelling. Due to weathering and extensive use of lime mortar many of the existing chimneys have loose or missing mortar. Brick is also occasionally found in foundations, and at a few locations brick has been installed as a paving material for sidewalks and entrance steps.

Most of the brick construction found in the area is buff colored because of the clays found in and around San Marcos. In the late 1800s bricks were made from local clays and red clay was not available without excessive cost for transportation.

Rough-faced concrete block, which resembles the look of stone, is used as a residential building material for skirt and wall construction, and for wall or fence construction around residential properties in both districts.

The following guidelines are recommended:

- Retain and maintain the original brick or block material.
- Replace loose or missing mortar using a mortar of the same composition as the original. Mortar is important to the integrity of the brick wall.

- Avoid using mortar that is harder than the original mortar as it can cause deterioration of the historic masonry material. Historic mortar has a high lime content, therefore it is as soft or softer than the material it is joining. Do not use ready mixed masons mortar when repointing brick because it has a strong portland cement content and is harder than historic brick.
- Repair or replace flashing as needed to ensure a watertight connection between the chimney and the roof.
- Clean brick gently and avoid abrasive cleaning such as high pressure water blasting or other high pressure blasting material. Chemical cleaning may be required to remove some stains. Consult a knowledgeable contractor or the Texas Historical Commission for more information.
- Avoid installing brick or block where these materials were not originally used.
- Avoid installing brick on the walls of a house that originally had wood siding. To install brick over wood siding changes the character of the house and can destroy the wood beneath.



HISTORICALLY, METAL ROOFS WERE MADE BY FOLDING METAL SHEET TOGETHER CREATING A VERTICAL "SEAM"



PRESSED METAL SHINGLES HAVE A DISTINCTIVE APPEARANCE



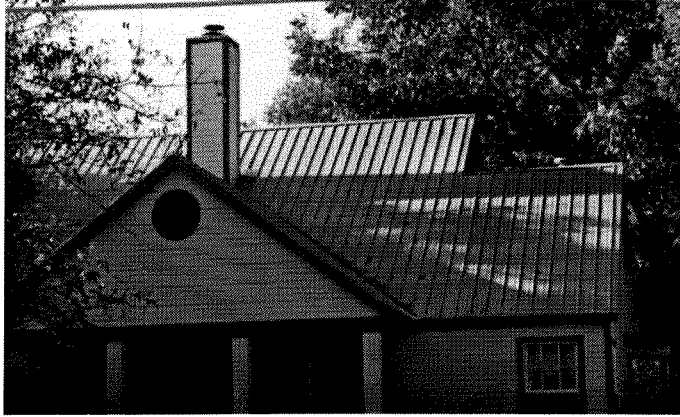
ONE OF MANY CORRUGATED METAL ROOFING MATERIALS FOUND IN SAN MARCOS

Metal

The primary use of metal on historic residential homes in San Marcos was as a roofing or roof related decoration such as cresting and weathervanes. Standing seam metal roofing, which is found on many houses in South Texas, is not presently evident in the two historic areas of San Marcos. This type of metal roof was well adapted to odd shapes or projections. The pans were formed from Galvanized steel sheets in a sheet metal shop and could be designed to fit roofs such as turrets. The roofer turned the seams over and the seams were then soldered to form a watertight barrier.

Pressed metal shingles were manufactured and installed as a roofing material in the late 1800s, and are seen on several residential buildings. These materials were also formed from galvanized steel and were pre-manufactured in St. Louis, Kansas City, and other large industrial areas. Pressed metal has been installed as a skirting material on some houses, but was probably not an original material.

Corrugated metal roofs were also commonly used in Texas. As in standing seam roofs their limitation was due to the fact that lengths were limited to 8 feet which caused numerous end laps, and on larger houses increased chances of roof leaks. Corrugated roofing is found on houses, garages, barns, and other outbuildings. Newer sheet metal profiles such as "V" crimp and pre-finished metal standing seam have been added to older houses as repairs are made.



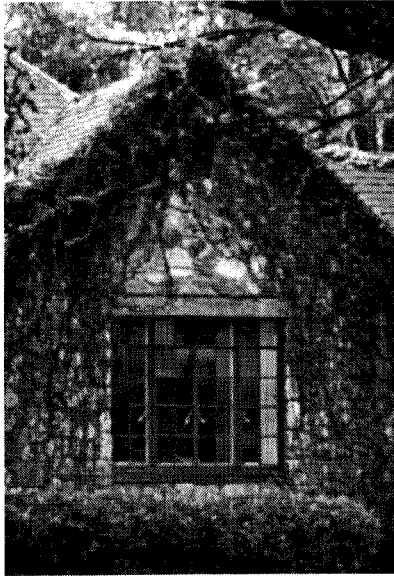
A CONTEMPORARY METAL
ROOFING MATERIAL

Ornamental iron, although used during the period on commercial structures, was not commonly used for residential construction. Cast iron is not evident in the San Marcos Historic Districts.

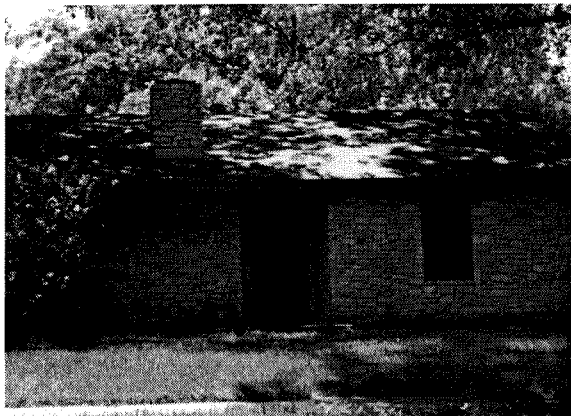
Metal windows were used in residential applications in the 1930s, and are evident on a few houses in the historic districts.

The following guidelines are recommended:

- Replace deteriorated metal with new primed or pre-finished metal of the same or compatible material. Pressed metal shingles are still manufactured and can be replaced in localized areas as needed.
- Re-install decorative roof details, such as cresting, when replacing the primary roofing material.
- Avoid installing an inappropriately scaled metal roofing material on a house that did not have a metal roof originally. Many of the current metal roofs have an industrial appearance and should be avoided.
- Fabricated metal should not replace other materials such as wood columns.
- Metal windows should not replace wood windows.
- Avoid installing decorative metal iron work over windows that did not include them in the original design.
- Avoid installing a pressed metal skirt where one did not previously exist.



**HISTORIC APPLICATION
WITH STONE EXTERIOR**



CONTEMPORARY STONE VENEER

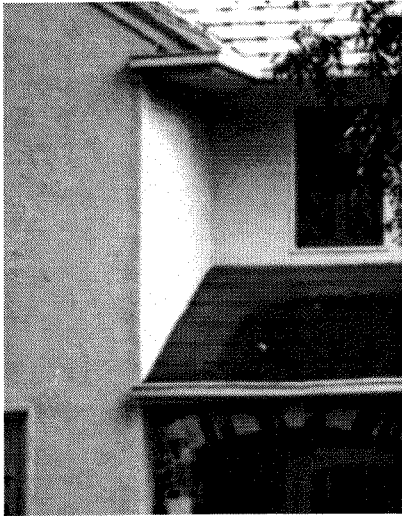
Stone

Stone is used most commonly in the two historic residential districts of San Marcos as a material for foundations and retaining walls. The stone was cut from locally quarried limestone block and was used in conjunction with a soft, lime mortar because of its natural softness. Field stone or rubble stone (stone not cut into a rectangular shape) was used in the construction of walls or curbs in front of houses. This stone, even though a harder consistency, was held together with a lime mortar. Similar stone was also used in the drainage beds of the water runoff systems in the area. Stone was not used as a veneer material or skin of the houses in the Belvin Street or San Antonio Street Historical Districts. However, several newer houses in the San Antonio Street Historical District are clad in various types and patterns of stone. In these two districts, only one historic home still in existence, had been constructed with stone as the primary exterior material.

The following guidelines are recommended:

- Replace deteriorated stone with stone that matches the original in color and texture.
- If a wall has deteriorated or is missing mortar it should be replaced with mortar of the same composition as the original in composition and color. Portland cement, or masons mortar is too hard and will cause the stone to deteriorate and crumble.
- It is not recommended that stone be added to the foundation or face of a house because this changes the original integrity of the house.
- Retain stone walls and drainage beds.
- Use stone as a site design material such as walks, walls and planter beds.

Stucco



STUCCO CREATES A
SMOOTH WALL SURFACE



STUCCO TAKES ON MANY SHAPES

Stucco, also called cement plaster, is a hardened cementitious paste which is applied over a wire mesh or lath. It creates an exterior wall surface which can be made smooth or can have a sculpted texture. Stucco has no dimension or shape of its own but can be used to form many shapes.

The historic districts of San Marcos have only a few stucco houses. This would have been a building material of the 1920's and 1930's and appears on Tudor style houses and as detail treatment on a few other examples. Small cracks are an inherent property in stucco due to the shrinkage of the plaster. Small cracks can be concealed by applying an elastomeric paint which has the ability to stretch and return to its shape. Large cracks can be repaired and deteriorated or missing stucco can be replaced with stucco that matches the texture and composition of the original material.

Stucco is a material to be used as the initial exterior wall surface of a building. It is not intended to be installed over another wall surface material. Installing stucco over a wood siding will cause the wood beneath to deteriorate and will change the overall appearance of the house by eliminating the original detail and shadows of the boards.

The following guidelines are recommended:

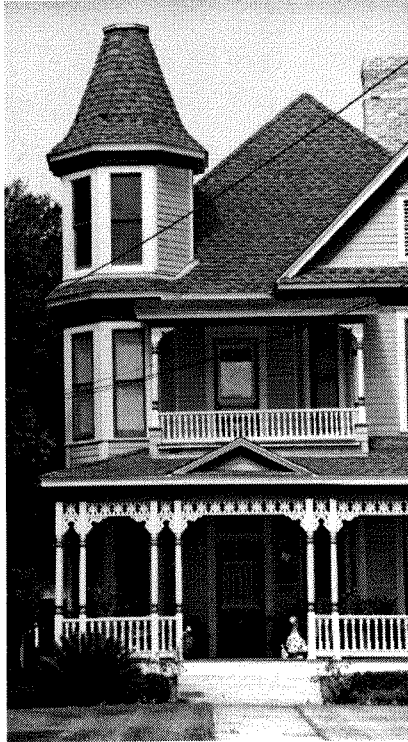
- Retain and maintain original stucco.
- Avoid installing stucco over another material.

Wood

Wood was the primary building material in residential construction in San Marcos. It was readily available, did not require the skills of as many craftsmen, and was used for structural elements as well as skin.

The majority of houses built during this period on Belvin Street and San Antonio Street are covered with horizontal wood siding. Wood with a tapered profile is in clapboard or lap siding while a milled profile has a more decorative shape. Board and batten, which is a vertical siding, is commonly used on outbuildings such as garages, barns and sheds, and occasionally on small houses. Another common use of wood is decorative wood shingles used as a siding, which was relatively easy to use as a decorative feature on gable ends, turrets, or dormers. Patterns included fish scale, diamond, square cut, and rounded. Wood shingle roofs, although common, are not presently found on the historic houses in the two areas. This may be the result of previous replacement due to deterioration.

Wood details are found on all houses from all styles and periods of construction. Victorian and Classical styles include ornate turned columns, spindles, box columns, columns of classical order, brackets, bargeboards, cut and turned frieze details, elaborate doors and door surrounds. Less ornate details of the Craftsman, Folk Victorian and Colonial Revival styles include box columns, brackets and simple porch railings. Wood was the most common material used for porch flooring and is prone to decay because of the exposure to weather conditions. Flooring was usually a high quality wood that was painted on all sides and edges prior to installation to prolong the life of the wood.

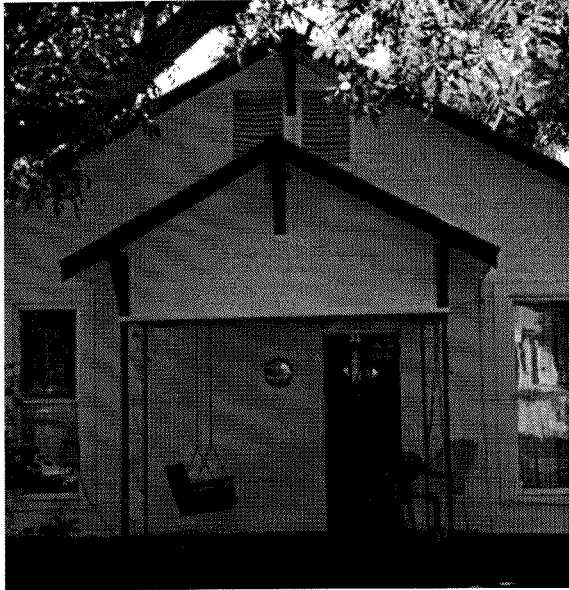


Wood is the primary skirting material on historic houses. Because houses were built above ground on posts and beams, a skirt was constructed from the floor level down to the ground. This skirting usually reflects the same siding profile as the house, was a wider horizontal board, or was a wood lattice, which allowed for ventilation. This wood lattice was commonly installed as a horizontal/vertical grid, rather than the wood lattice which is available today. Solid skirt materials must be vented to allow air to pass under the house and eliminate moisture from the foundation.

The following guidelines are recommended:

- Retain and repair wood siding and details.
- Replace missing or badly deteriorated wood features with wood of the same dimension and profile.
- Refrain from installing synthetic materials over existing wood materials because they frequently cause the historic material to rot.
- Refrain from replacing a deteriorated wood feature with another material.
- Explore the use of epoxy wood repair materials in lieu of replacing an entire wood member. This has proven effective on rotted column bases, window sills and sash, etc.
- Replace rotted wood that is in contact with the ground with a chemically treated wood to prolong the life of the feature. This can be done on skirting and steps. Treated wood can be used to rebuild lattice skirting by cutting strips from standard treated 2x4 material. All treated wood should be thoroughly dried prior to installation.

Synthetic Materials



ASBESTOS SHINGLES WERE
USED IN THE 1930S AND
1940S AS SIDING

With the advent of plastics and modern methods of forming materials, which were not available until after World War II, home owners have been influenced by the promise of never having to paint or perform routine maintenance. In the late 1930's asbestos shingles were the first modern no-maintenance products which have been followed by aluminum siding, and vinyl siding for the main skin of a house. There are several houses in the historic districts which have asbestos shingle siding.

Asbestos shingles which were installed over existing siding have not been detrimental to the siding underneath because it breathes, whereas aluminum and vinyl are so air-tight they cause the siding underneath to trap moisture and rot. The installation of a foam insulation before the vinyl causes even greater damage because all moisture is sealed into the siding envelope. Asbestos siding is only hazardous if it is removed, and then special disposal precautions must be observed.

Houses within a historic district which may have a synthetic material applied to them may retain the synthetic material without penalty. However, they would not qualify individually for State or Federal Historic designation.

Stucco is not a synthetic material, except in the most recent advent of so-called stucco which is man made as an insulating and finish system. Stucco does not appear to be a commonly used material in San Marcos, although there are a few examples.

The following are guidelines are recommended:

- Retain and repair the original building material of a house.
- Replace only that material which is beyond repair.
- Replace deteriorated material with compatible new material.
- Avoid installing any synthetic building material on top of existing wood. Many of these materials can trap moisture in the wall which will cause the wood beneath to deteriorate. It can also trap moisture in the insulation which reduces the effectiveness of the insulation.
- Avoid installing synthetic siding on top of existing siding as a means of “modernizing” the house or attempting to make the house more energy efficient. This changes the character of the original design and frequently destroys the character defining features of the house and neighborhood.
- Such details as corner boards, window and door surrounds, gable vents and rafter ends are often changed or eliminated when the installation of synthetic materials occurs.
- Avoid installing stucco over existing materials for it too changes the original design and can cause deterioration beneath.
- Avoid the use of synthetic stucco materials because they cause rapid deterioration of the wood beneath.
- Avoid installing “wood grained” materials. Wood used in historic houses was smoothly sanded with no obvious grain.